The Book of Romans

Chapter 10

 We are into a weighty subject which bears closer scrutiny and study. Going back to the beginning of this letter, and it does mean we should always be aware of the reason for this letter and review it often as we study the whole of this letter. There were Jewish believers in Christ as well as Gentile believers of Christ living in Rome, but there seems to be a contentious relationship between the two groups, and this in the midst of the turmoil created by the Roman leadership, over these new believers. At the same time, we find that there had been no one to present the true Gospel or good News of His death and resurrection, and His saving Grace. They were probably converts through the miracles of Jesus during His lifetime, or hearing His teaching.

 Now the contention between them was the Jews' belief they were still under the Law and expected the new Gentile believers to do the same. This was because there had been no one to explain the Salvation message and the fulfilling of the Law through Christ's atoning death the misunderstanding only grew, and at the same time both had to go into hiding because of the persecution of the Romans.

 Paul has written this letter first to explain the nature of sin and the reason for atonement, and second that Jesus was the atonement as well being the fulfillment of the prophecies of old. He is laying out a step-by-step manifesto, as it were, and a doctrinal theological treatise to set the foundation for the Christians both Jew and Gentile to follow until he is able to get there. Frankly this letter to the Roman Christians has become the doctrinal basis for Christianity today.

 Now in Chapter 9, Paul, after focusing on doctrine, then turned his focus on the Jews themselves. Since Abraham, the Jews were a separated people according to God's will and desire. Once the Jewish people were established and the Law was presented to Moses, the interaction with gentiles was limited to business only and anything Gentile was considered unclean. That had never changed right up to the time of Christ, so old beliefs and traditions were still in force. Therefore, Paul addresses the plight of the Jew in regards to the fractured relationship with God and how God through His prophets had warned the Jews that the time was coming when He would turn to the Gentiles, because the Jews had rejected Him.

 Now Paul will continue on his plea to the Jews, with hopes of some changes that can be made.

 A] Romans 10: 1 through 4; (read)

 1] "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God, for Israel, that they might be saved."*

 Now in the last chapter, the last verse, Paul quoted Isaiah 8:14; ,"Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offense." That stumbling stone was the Law. They couldn't get past the Law, and all the Law did was tell them what was sin and what was not. The Law could not save them. Save them from what? Their sins and because their sins were evident, they were lost, and being lost there was no eternal life in Christ. Paul had explained Righteousness and Justification through Faith in Christ, but they had no such faith.

 Think about this, the Law told them about their sin, gave directions how to live a life in God, and gave them the atonement sacrifices to present before the Lord, yet over the hundreds of years those sacrifices came to mean little. God gave them the prophecies, yet they never understood them.

 2] "*For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge*."

 That is an indictment for today isn't it? God gave the Jews the whole of the Tanakh, yet they never knew it. The Great scholars of the day would rewrite, reinterpret, and then write clarifications of what they did not understand. These came out as the Books of Traditions, but although the Jewish leadership had a tremendous zeal for the Scripture, yet they never knew the Scripture. This left the people themselves searching for something their leaders couldn't find.

 That indictment today is, we too, are still searching for a truth so many have missed. How many new Churches are springing up following a leader who promising them the 'truth'? Today's Church follows after the entertainment factor or the fellowship factor but not too many follow the Scriptural factor. There seems to be an emptiness, in many Churches today that these new startups attempt to fill. We can see the emptiness in the fact that too many fall to the practices of the TV Evangelists who promise things for money. It fills the belly of the TV Evangelists but not the heart of the viewer.

 3] "*For, they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God."*

 Remember back in our studies, that when the Jewish leaders wrote the Books of Traditions, including the Mishnah, Gemara and Talmud, and these became the main rules for living in Israel. Remember as the Pharisees would cite to Jesus, "Tradition says"? They couldn't stand on the Tanakh alone, they had to amplify it for popular consumption. Also, what the Priests and Pharisees had done was turn the Law into an object of fear.

 4] "*For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes."*

 Now as we looked at before, 'Righteous' was a standard of excellence to be met. The Law, because it came from God directly to Moses was a standard to be met. It was God's standard, wasn't it? And what did the Jews do? they modified it. But the other point here is man strives to live up to the Law, he does it in his own strength, doesn't he? So it no longer is God's Righteousness but man's. Therefore Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah, being the Atonement Lamb sacrifice, was the fulfillment of the Law's requirements and it is our FAITH that makes us righteous, not our works. -----Does this make sense?

 B] Romans 10: 5 through 13; (read)

 1] "*For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the Law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." (Leviticus 18:5)*

 We are talking about perfect obedience of the Law, and if one does this perfect obedience, he will live a happy life in Canaan. That is what the passage in Leviticus actually says. (Canaan was the Land which is now Israel, by the way.)

 2] "*But the righteousness of Faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven'? (that is to bring Christ down from above) (Deuteronomy 30:12) or, "Who will descend into the abyss?( that is to bring Christ up from the dead)(Deuteronomy 30:13)."*

 This 'righteousness' Paul speaks of, is faith based and you cannot go anywhere to get it, you receive it where you are. Jesus coming down or Jesus being dead, that is not where you find faith, faith is believing Jesus IS God, yes, the Son of God. You just know in your heart this as fact. You believe.

 3] "*But what does it say? "The Word is near you, in your mouth, in your heart." (Deuteronomy 30:14) (That is the word of faith which we preach): That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

 Here is the crux of faith. This is a verse we have all heard and accepted as the Gospel. But be careful with this. As Dr. McGee says, " There are many folks who maintain that a believer has to make a public confession of faith. That is not what Paul is saying here, it does not mean to go forward in a public meeting. Paul is saying that man needs to bring into agreement his confession and his life. Frankly I do not have a problem with either, I did make a public confession of faith at 15, but, then later on, did my life reflect the confession I made? Not really. Righteousness comes when the life lived, and the confession made, and the faith exhibited are all in alignment.

 4] "*For the scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will never be put to shame." (Isaiah 28:16)*

 Actually, the Hebrew word in this Isaiah passage we translate as ‘shame’, translates better as haste or made to run, in other words, as may happen today, where folks will call on Jesus as Lord and Savior, yet they may be chased away by those who find fault in their confession, yet they should remain strong; but the main thrust of this statement is the word 'whoever'. Not just the Jew any more.

 5] "*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For all who calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved."(Joel 2:23)*

 Do you see what Paul is saying to the Jewish believers? You do not have a monopoly anymore on God. He is God of all. All who believe. And the Gentile is not under Law, but under Grace which we will look at later. Therefore, anyone who repents and calls on God will be saved.

 C] Romans 10: 14 through 19; (read)

 1] "*How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"*

 Well Paul knows the Jewish hierarchy does not like him, and I am sure warnings have gone all over the place about Paul, but Paul in telling these Jewish believers that the Gentile believers are now on equal footing with them, he tells them, therefore how does this message of salvation get out to those who do not know God to begin with? This is the whole point of the Apostles bringing the Gospel to the world, to preach the Good News of Jesus to the world. And because the Jewish people are rejecting the Gospel that Paul and the other Apostles are bringing, it must then go to the Gentiles.

 2] "*And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things." (Isaiah 52:7)*

 In Matthew 28:18 Jesus instructed His disciples to "Make disciples of all nations" and in Acts 1: 8; Jesus instructs them to be witnesses of Him in Jerusalem, Judea and to the end of the earth. Paul is telling the Jews that he is about the business that he was ordained to from Jesus on the Damascus Road, and as are the other Apostles, that the Gospel message is not expressly for the Jew anymore but for all who would seek and believe.

 What a joy it is to be able to be about the Father's business. As Isaiah put it, "How beautiful the feet of those who preach the Gospel of Peace." Frankly I never understood those pastors who became burned out in their ministry. Just being in the pulpit should invigorate them. But by the same time remember that the early Jerusalem Church began to have problems and it wasn't until they got better organized and allotted responsibility did the ministry really begin. The preacher could then concentrate on his particular area of responsibility.

 One other little point I noticed, and it may be insignificant, but keeping in mind the turmoil between the Jewish believer and the Gentile believer, Paul tells them this is a Gospel of PEACE. There should be peace as well as unity among all the believers, should there not be? I, then wonder, why isn’t there peace and unity? What has happened to the Followers of Christ today?

 3] "*But they have not all obeyed the Gospel, for Isaiah says, "Lord who has believed our report?" (Isaiah 53:1) So then Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."*

 There is a sad reality here, and remembering Paul IS addressing the Jewish believers first but also the Gentile, he flatly states, that not all will believe. Even when they are presented the Gospel, yet many just did not get it, and that is a real truism today. I remember at that Billy Graham Crusade in '57, for the 5 nights I was there, quite a few went forward but a huge host of them did not.

 The question now comes, how can a person know about the saving Grace of Jesus without someone else who does know, telling them?

 4] "*But I say, have they not heard?, Yes indeed. "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." (Psalm 19:4)*

 The Jews did have their prophets and they did not read, they had their books of the prophets and still did not pay attention. I can almost picture the Jewish leaders standing with their hands over their eyes and thumbs stretched over their ears.

 D] "Romans 10:19 through 21; (read)

 1] "*But I say, Israel did not know? First Moses said, "I will provoke you to jealousy, by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."(Deuteronomy 32:21)*

 Paul is digging deeper into the Jews lack of understanding, wherein THEY KNEW via the prophets that the message of salvation would be brought to the Gentile nations. They chose to ignore it.

 2] "*But Isaiah is very bold and says, "I was found by those who did not seek me, I was made manifest to those who did not ask for me." (Isaiah 65:1)*

 Paul openly quotes passages from first, Moses in Deuteronomy and now Isaiah regarding the salvation of the Gentiles. So according to Paul there is no excuse.

 3] "*But to Israel he says, "All day long I have stretched out my hand to a disobedient and contrary people." (Isaiah 65: 2)*

 No mincing of words here, is there? When you read through the Old Testament, especially The Histories from I &2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, and 1 & 2 Chronicles you can see the arrogance of the Jewish people and of their leadership, both kings and the priests. God continued to reach out to His people, and they would reject Him.